

## Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01

/070 W

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R 271759Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7479

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 2331

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEPARTURE FROM SWEDEN OF INGMAR  
BERGMAN

REF: STOCKHOLM A-98

1. SUMMARY. SWEDEN'S FAMED FILM DIRECTOR INGMAR BERGMAN  
HAS ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION TO LEAVE SWEDEN FOR GOOD AND  
START A NEW LIFE ABROAD AT THE AGE OF 58. IN A LETTER  
TO THE PRESS ON APRIL 22 HE SAID THAT HARASSMENT BY  
TAX AUTHORITIES DEPRIVED HIM OF THE SECURITY HE NEEDS FOR  
HIS PROFESSIONAL WORK. HE LEAVES HIS PROPERTY AND ASSETS  
IN SWEDEN AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE TAX AUTHORITIES. HE  
SEES THE TAX AUTHORITIES NOT AS "UNBIASED, IMPARTIAL AND JUDICIOUS  
BUT AS A GANG OF PRESTIGE-HUNGRY POKER  
PLAYERS." HE SEES SWEDEN AS AFFLICTED "BY A SPECIAL KIND OF  
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BUREAUCRACY, GROWING LIKE A GALLOPING FORM OF CANCER, IN NO

WAY TRAINED FOR ITS SENSITIVE AND DIFFICULT TASK, AND EQUIPPED BY SOCIETY WITH POWERS ITS OFFICIALS ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO HANDLE." WHILE THE PUBLICITY INSIDE SWEDEN AND ABROAD ARISING FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S TREATMENT OF BERGMAN AND HIS DEPARTURE IS CLEARLY DISADVANTAGEOUS TO THE PROSPECTS OF THE RULING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE SEPTEMBER 1976 ELECTIONS, BERGMAN'S ELIEIST IMAGE TENDS TO LIMIT THE IMPACT OF HIS TROUBLES ON THE TOTAL ELECTORATE. END SUMMARY

2. THE ABRUPT DEPARTURE ON APRIL 22 OF FAMED FILM AND THEATER DIRECTOR INGMAR BERGMAN FROM HIS HOME AND ARTISTIC LIFE IN SWEDEN HAS AROUSED STRONG INTEREST BOTH IN SWEDEN AND ABROAD.

3. THE "BERGMAN STORY" BEGAN ON JANUARY 30, 1976 WHEN BERGMAN WAS ARRESTED BY STOCKHOLM POLICE FOR QUESTIONING ON SUSPICION OF INCOME TAX EVASION. AFTER BEING CHARGED WITH SUBMITTING FALSE INFORMATION ON HIS TAX RETURN, BERGMAN HAD A NERVOUS COLLAPSE AND HAD TO BE HOSPITALIZED. IN MID-APRIL THE COUNTY PUBLIC PROSECUTOR DECIDED TO DROP THE CHARGES, AND ON APRIL 22 BERGMAN ANNOUNCED VIA PUBLIC LETTER IN THE NEWSPAPER EXPRESSED THAT HE WAS LEAVING SWEDEN.

4. BERGMAN, WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN A CONFIRMED SOCIAL DEMOCRAT WHO ACCEPTED ITS "GREY COMPROMISES," STATES IN HIS LETTER THAT HE MUST LEAVE SWEDEN IN ORDER TO FIND THE SECURITY HIS WORK REQUIRES, AND TO ESCAPE THE "HARASSMENT" OF THE TAX AUTHORITIES. HE HAS DISSOLVED HIS FIRM CINEMATOGRAF AND CANCELLED HIS FILM PROJECTS IN SWEDEN. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAS PLACED HIS ASSETS IN SWEDEN AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE NATIONAL TAX BOARD IN ORDER TO COVER ANY OUTSTANDING TAX DEBTS SHOULD HE LOSE HIS CASE. BERGMAN WILL TRAVEL TO LOS ANGELES TO DISCUSS A NEW FILM PROJECT, THE PRESS REPORTS, AND LATER TO ROME.

5. IN HIS LETTER, BERGMAN OBSERVES THAT PEOPLE HAVE ADVISED HIM TO ATTACK THE NEWSPAPER AFTONBLADET FOR ITS TREATMENT OF HIS AFFAIRS. HIS ANSWER, HE SAYS, IS THAT THIS WOULD BE POINTLESS. "A NEWSPAPER THAT EXCELLS IN INSINUATIONS, OPEN SLANDER, HALF TRUTHS AND SCURRILOUS PERSONAL PERSECUTION COLLECTS CENSURE FROM THE PRESS OMBUDSMAN WITH THE THE SAME JOY AS AN INDIAN COLLECTS UNCLASSIFIED

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SCALPS. I PRESUME THAT EVERY SOCIETY HAS USE FOR A SEWAGE OUTLET LIKE AFTONBLADET. WHAT I CAN'T GET OVER IS THAT THIS SEWER IS THE FLAGSHIP OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRESS AND THAT WITHIN THIS DISINTEGRATING CLUSTER OF CELLS WORK SEVERAL RESPECTABLE AND DECENT PEOPLE."

6. COMMENT: WHILE THE AFFAIR IS RECEIVING WIDE ATTENTION HERE, THE ULTIMATE DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT MAY BE MILDER THAN

THE OUTCRY IN THE PRESS WOULD INDICATE. MANY PEOPLE  
SEEM TO SYMPATHIZE WITH BERGMAN, BUT THE STREAK OF ELITISM  
WHICH RUNS THROUGH BERGMAN'S ACTIONS AND THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS  
SUPPORTERS MAY TEND TO LIMIT ITS IMPACT ON THE ELECTORATE.  
HOWEVER, ESPECIALLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUCH OTHER SOCIAL  
DEMOCRATIC MISSTEPS AS THE ASTRID LINDGREN AFFAIR, BERGMAN'S  
STATEMENT THAT HE REALIZES THAT "ANYONE IN THIS COUNTRY, AT  
ANY TIME... MAY BE ATTACKED AND DEGRADED BY A SPECIAL KIND OF  
BUREAUCRACY WHICH IS GROWING LIKE A CANCER" WILL FURTHER ERODE  
THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE.  
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